

UNION COLLECTIVE



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EDITOR'S NOTE: With the publication of this issue, we unveil a fresh, contemporary look and also a new, more inclusive name. Because our magazine serves and represents all of the diverse communities and constituents that are Union—not solely our alumni/ae network—we rejoice that we are now the *Union Collective*.

UNION COLLECTIVE

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From the President



“At a time when our country is in deep spiritual crisis, Union wants to continue to be a light of hope, presenting a way forward.”

— **President Jones**

A NEW ACADEMIC YEAR brings with it hopeful possibilities. At a time when our country is in deep spiritual crisis, Union wants to continue to be a light of hope, presenting a way forward. Our commitment has never been stronger, and I’m pleased to share that this year brings one of our largest incoming classes in decades. In August, we welcomed 110 new students from 11 countries and several states across the U.S. to our campus.

Among our international contingent are five students from China and India who are part of the inaugural Trinity Union Fellows program, a partnership with Trinity Church Wall Street. These students will receive academic training at Union and faith formation as part of the Trinity community, as they pursue Master of Sacred Theology degrees.

This year also brings the beginning of our campus renewal project. The first phase of the project will be the renovation of Hastings Hall, which will begin in 2019 after commencement. The residence hall was last renovated nearly 30 years ago, but the windows, plumbing and electrical systems are original to the building, which was completed in 1910, more than 100 years ago. It’s well past time for our students to have modern and more accessible residences.

Phase 2 of the project will include making the rest of our campus more accessible and providing additional dedicated student spaces, a new multifaith chapel and meditation space and an updated café/lounge space that will replace the Pit. This phase will begin sometime after the Hastings renovation is completed.

In early spring 2019, we will begin to see preparations for construction of the new multi-use building that will be built on the northern end of campus. This building will house dedicated EDS at Union space, new classrooms and new faculty housing, along with private residences. Our new facilities within the building are expected to be completed in late 2022.

As the projects get underway over the coming months, updates will be available on the Union website. I am excited about the positive changes that our campus will see this year and beyond. And I’m equally thrilled to bear witness to the journey our new students will take. Now is the time to remind ourselves how critical Union is to the world. Let us look ahead with hopefulness toward a more sustainable future for Union that will allow us to continue to provide rigorous theological education while addressing the pressing social justice issues of the day.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Serene Jones'.

The Rev. Dr. Serene Jones
*President and Johnston Family Professor
for Religion & Democracy*

UNION MAKING NEWS

New Leadership to Positively Transform the World



Global Connections

Union Faculty Travel to Senegal to Explore Partnerships

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, Union faculty have traveled to other countries as part of an International Connections Initiative designed to build or strengthen ties to theological schools and religious institutions around the world. This year, a delegation of Union faculty, students and staff traveled to Senegal, visiting institutions in Dakar and Saint-Louis.

A predominantly Muslim country with many ethnic groups, Senegal is home to a small number of Christians, mostly Roman Catholic, who make up about 4 percent of the population. The nation is a harmonious society, and multireligious families and communities are not uncommon. That is one of the reasons Dr. Aliou Niang, associate professor of New Testament and a native Senegalese, was interested in exploring partnerships with the Civilizations, Religions, Arts and Communication (CRAC) center at Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis and the Saint Augustine Center of Philosophy and Theology in Dakar.

Niang was joined on the trip by Rev. Dr. Troy Messenger, director and assistant professor of worship; Sensei Greg Snyder, senior director of Buddhist studies; Dr. Jeremy Hultin, visiting associate professor of Biblical languages; Matthew Baker, head librarian of Burke Library; Rev. Fred Davie, executive vice president; Robin Reese, vice president of communications and marketing; Bassirou Diop, electronic media and IT support; Ph.D. student Stanley Talbert and M.A. student Karmen Smith.

In addition to meeting with CRAC faculty and students (pictured), the Union delegation learned more about Senegalese history and culture with visits to Gorée Island and the African Renaissance Monument. **U**

ABOVE: The Union delegation met with Gaston Berger University faculty and students to discuss a possible exchange program between the two institutions.



“...70 farmworkers started marching from Delano to Sacramento, but when they got there they were 10,000 farmworkers—because they organized all along the way.” — **Dolores Huerta**

◀ In April, iconic labor organizer Dolores Huerta delivered the eighth annual Judith Davidson Moyers Women of Spirit lecture and received the Union Medal.

Sacred Waters

Union’s Annual Climate Change Ministers’ Training Focused on Water and Faith

IN JUNE, Union’s Center for Earth Ethics again partnered with the Climate Reality Project to host the annual ministers’ conference, equipping faith leaders for ministry in the time of climate change. This year, the training focused on the faith leaders’ role and responsibility in protecting access to water, the science undergirding global water systems, and how we can create communities that are more resilient to extreme weather. In particular, the conference sought to focus on climate change as a human rights crisis—not just a meteorological one—and to emphasize the disproportionate impact of climate change on frontline communities.

The conference featured a wide range of programming—from an indigenous water blessing (pictured right) to a public dialogue with former Vice President Al Gore and Catherine Coleman Flowers, founder of the Alabama Center for Rural Enterprise Community Development Corporation—designed to deepen leaders’ understanding of climate issues and their passion for answering the call to care for God’s creation.



The 50-plus faith leaders who attended represented a wide variety of faith traditions and geographic locations. They drew on each other’s varied contexts and experiences to learn best practices to take home and fight for climate justice in their home communities. ♪

To get information about next summer’s ministers’ training or to learn more about the Center for Earth Ethics, contact Genie Cooper-Newton at ecooper@centerforearthethics.org.

When the Personal Becomes Pedagogical

Presbyterian Educator Integrates End-of-Life Issues into Seminary Curriculum

BY EMILY ENDERS ODOM '90

FOR DR. SU YON PAK, the “personal” is not only political but also profoundly pastoral, prophetic, and pedagogical.

“My personal always informs my professional; and vice versa,” says Pak, Union’s senior director and associate professor for Integrative and Field-Based Education. “The way I do my teaching and research is to start by saying, ‘If I’m asking myself certain questions in response to a life experience I’m going through, what does it mean for us to train today’s religious leaders in that area?’ Going through an experience helps me to teach about it.”

Most recently, Pak became interested in aging and in Alzheimer’s Disease while caring for her mother, who died of the disease in March of last year, and her father, who died of pneumonia seven years ago while living at her home.

“Although my father and I didn’t have ‘the conversation,’” Pak says, referencing the kind of frank talk that health care professionals and spiritual leaders advocate, especially as family members near the end of life, “because I knew his values through my interactions with him, I was able to negotiate with my siblings with very little conflict. My father’s last gift to us as he was dying was that he passed away before his breathing tube would have had to be removed, as we had decided to do.”

As Pak began to research and later write on the subject of aging parents, she discovered the work of The Conversation Project (TCP), a public engagement initiative whose watchwords are, “It’s not only about dying but about living. It’s not about ‘what’s the matter with you’ but about ‘what matters to you.’”

Over the course of the next two years, starting in the fall of 2017, Pak began working with her colleagues the Rev. Dr. Yvette D. Wilson-Barnes, associate dean of student affairs, and the Rev. Dr. Jane Huber, visiting professor and director of Practices of Ministry and Vocational Development, to incorporate TCP’S mission and vision—along with broader issues around death

and dying—into Union’s field education curriculum as well as its academic, religious and student life. At the same time, she is actively pursuing the next phase—creating a model that can be shared with and adopted by other seminaries.

The now comprehensive program—which has included everything from informal talks to traditional, continuing

“We need to acknowledge and address... inequality even as we help prepare people to have their end-of-life care wishes be expressed.” —Su Yon Pak

education courses—will culminate in a “Reimagine End of Life week,” Oct. 29 through Nov. 1, during which some of Union’s daily chapel services will focus on end of life. There will also be an opportunity on campus that week for students, staff, faculty, alumni/ae and others to engage in “Conversations I

Wish I Had,” a national touring initiative hosted by Morgan Brown, in which people are invited to have conversations with deceased loved ones.

In light of Union’s historic commitment to social justice, Pak has also identified a need to engage not only *that* people die but *how* they die. “Although death is an equalizing force, there is an inequality to how we die,” she says. “For some communities, whether it’s due to lack of access to health care, gun violence or systematic devaluing of their lives, the threat of ‘death out of season’ is pervasive. We need to acknowledge and address that inequality even as we help prepare people to have their end-of-life care wishes be expressed.”

In working with younger people, Pak often finds that they “can’t relate” to death and dying because they see it primarily as an aging or terminal illness issue. “The integrative approach we have adopted not only brings home the urgency around end-of-life issues for themselves and their families,” she says, “but it also teaches our students how to begin to introduce the subject into their faith communities. Ultimately, as The Conversation Project so aptly expresses it, it’s about ‘what matters to you, not what’s the matter with you.’”



Rev. Rosemary Lloyd, advisor to faith communities for The Conversation Project, leads “Sacred Conversations: Talking about Living by Talking about Dying” in November 2017.



Ruth Wooden, center

‘And the Old Shall Dream Dreams’

Encore Gives the Spirit a ‘Second Wind’ BY EDWARD MORAN

SOME OF THE MOST COMPELLING passages in Scripture, like the stories of Sarah and Abraham and of Elizabeth and Zechariah, describe God’s Spirit breaking into the so-called “twilight years” of life, causing older folk to undertake bold new ventures—even prophecy and parenthood—with faith and ferocity. In his fiery sermon at the first Pentecost, Peter makes an “encore reference” to the prophet Joel’s proclamation about “youngsters seeing visions and oldsters dreaming dreams” (Acts 2:17).

Not content to spend the last decades of their life in very un-Pentecostal rocking chairs or golf carts, several cohorts of the 55+ set have been gathering at the Union campus over the past two years as part of the acclaimed Encore Transition Program, attesting to the fact that the Spirit provides a “second wind.”

Under the direction of retired ad executive Ruth Wooden, with staff assistance provided by the Rev. Dr. Jane Huber, the Encore program engages a diverse group of a dozen or so 55+ adults in a semester-long program of discernment, dialogue, and experience with what an “encore” stage of productive, purpose-focused adulthood might look like. The group meets for eight evening sessions every two weeks to work through some critical questions and develop individual plans for learning more about working intentionally with social purpose.

Through encountering writings by contemplative activists like Thomas Merton, Richard Rohr, Joan Chittister, and Parker Palmer, participants in the Encore Transition Program ground themselves in philosophical reflection as well as practical activities designed to make their “encore” work fruitful for themselves and those they serve.

Wooden came to Union after a chance encounter in 2011 with the Seminary’s president, the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones. She took one social ethics course “on a lark” and received her M.A. degree in 2016. Throughout those years, she had the idea for a “course she wished she could have taken.” Jones encouraged her to make that course a new offering at UTS.

So the Encore Transition Program began in the spring of 2017. More than 40 Encore fellows have since participated in one of three cohorts. The fourth gets underway this fall. Encore participants have been a diverse group: executives, lawyers, teachers, ministers, social workers, writers, and other professionals. All joined Encore with a singular purpose: to find a meaningful way to use their accumulated wisdom and experience in the service of others.

Typical of the participants is Kathy Dean. “I was looking for a new direction. I was also dealing with issues of my aging and a spiritual hunger. The program gave me clarity and guidance so I could make decisions about the next stage.”

Another Encore participant especially cherishes the non-material outcomes she has received from the program. Selma Jackson, a church leader and retired assistant vice president of Chemical Bank, declares: “The biggest takeaway was appreciating the people in my life and still having room to meet new people. I found nurturing my inner self and exploring untapped talents was most important in my autumn years.”

Huber, a visiting professor at Union, helps to invite the Encore fellows to a wide variety of mentoring opportunities at agencies in New York City. She sees the Encore Transition Program as a natural fit for Union’s commitment to lifelong learning and service. “The Encore cohorts make a difference by assembling like-minded people who have the passion and drive to put their spiritual commitments at an important transition point in life into action.” ¶

Edward Moran, a Presbyterian layperson and member of the Fall 2017 cohort of the Encore Transition Program, is an editor, hymn writer and literary historian. Moran was one of 10 finalists (out of 2,400 entries nationwide) in the 2016 Huffington Post/AARP Memoir Writing Competition.

Where Are the Children?

BY CAROL KESSLER '00

A Psychiatrist Hears the Cry Born during El Salvador's Civil War



CURRENT IMAGES of forced separations of Central American children from their parents reawaken memories of my experience as a volunteer during El Salvador's civil war, when I responded to the plea for physicians less likely to be targets of dollar-backed bullets at a time when health workers were persecuted for accompanying the poor. From 1980 to 1992, the U.S.-trained and funded Salvadoran military was responsible for

the murder and disappearance of countless civilians in the name of "democracy." Among the disappeared were children fleeing scorched earth policies—children snatched by soldiers, brought to caregiving institutions, and adopted as "orphans." A search was born at that time: Parents crying, "Where are our children?" Children crying, "Where is my mommy?"

After peace accords, the U.N. Truth Commission documented the disappearance of approximately 3,000 children. The sole survivor of the 1989 massacre of six Jesuit professors, Father Jon Cortina, created the Association for the Search of Disappeared Children (Pro-Busqueda). Its staff document the stories of mothers and now grown children separated during the war, reunite families, and demand justice in courts to this day. This association invited me to facilitate groups of creative expression, using skills developed by mental health professionals in post-dictatorship Argentina. One group drew a fist smashing glass, with a mother on one shard and a soldier holding her baby on another. The image mirrors today's family separations at the U.S./Mexico border.

As a physician, I have vowed to do no harm. As a pastor, I resurrect the call of the prophets and of Archbishop Romero to hear the cry of God's people for peace with justice. As a U.S. citizen, I call out for a time when my government will take responsibility, make reparations, stop the repression, and respect the human rights of all. ♪

Carol Kessler, M.D., M.Div. '00, is a Lutheran pastor who serves as a community child psychiatrist with immigrant families in the Bronx, N.Y. She volunteers with Physicians for Human Rights' Asylum Network.

Making Alumni/ae Connections

The office of Alumni/ae Relations facilitated a fruitful connection for a N.J. mission team led by alumnus Rev. Terry O'Brien '08, senior pastor of the Community Church (RCA) of Glen Rock, N.J. Thanks to West Virginia alumnus, Dr. Marvin Carr '73, O'Brien and his team were introduced to Rev. Helen Oates, pastor of the Chapel Hill United Methodist Church, Buckhannon, W.V., whose church opened its hearts and doors allowing the Glen Rock team to overnight at the church and worship with them on Sunday morning, June 24, before continuing on their trip to Logan W.V.



FRONT ROW L-R: Angelina DeSantis, Rev. Helen Oates - CHUMC, Jeanne Jones-O'Brien, Julia DeSantis, Catherine Bennett. BACK ROW L-R: Carl Fry, Rev. Terry O'Brien - CCGR, Caitlin O'Brien, Nori Tsiang, Kobie Tsiang, Laura Bird-Bennett.

Community Read Book Discussion



“The prison industrial complex crucifies the poorest and most vulnerable in our society. To not stand against this is a betrayal of our faith.”

– Kelly Brown Douglas

First Community Read Inspires EDS at Union Students

“You can’t understand most of the important things from a distance, Bryan. You have to get close.”

THIS SUMMER, all Episcopal Divinity School at Union students were asked to read Bryan Stevenson’s book *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. The book was selected as EDS at Union’s first Community Read because of Stevenson’s insights on discerning a vocation inside a merciless criminal justice system.

Just Mercy is the story of a man discovering his life’s work among death penalty inmates in Alabama’s notorious criminal justice system. Following his grandmother’s wisdom in the quote above, Stevenson writes movingly of how the faith of the prisoners and families he worked with—the people he has met up close—shaped

his call and how this broken faith has sustained him through the darkest moments of his work and witness at the Equal Justice Initiative.

The book has already proven to be a powerful touchstone for EDS at Union students as they explore their ministerial vocations. The Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, dean of EDS at Union, and Michelle Alexander, visiting professor of social justice, led a community-wide discussion of the book in September. On October 24, Bryan Stevenson will come to Union to give an address and engage with students at James Chapel. His

words will undoubtedly still be reverberating the following week as EDS at Union holds its convocation events, October 30–31, with the theme “Toward a Just Earth: Courageous Faith for Challenging Times.”

Through the inaugural semester’s classes and exciting events, EDS at Union is deliberately pressing its first class of students to consider these urgent questions: With whom are you discerning your vocation? Is this from a distance or up close? For, as Stevenson’s grandmother knew so well, a ministry of mercy and justice demands we draw close. 📌

CONVOCATION: October 30 & 31, 6:00 p.m. ET

Toward a Just Earth: Courageous Faith in Challenging Times

10/30 Dean’s Address, James Chapel at Union

10/31 Convocation with address by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, St. Paul’s Chapel, Trinity Church Wall Street, New York City



Igniting a Moral Revival



Poor People's Campaign: Feeling Like a Union Reunion

By Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons '17

PHOTOGRAPHY: SHARON FARMER



A SPECIAL MOMENT

The group of Union students looked a bit groggy when I caught up with them early on Monday morning at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. It was that awkward week of May between the end of final exams and commencement. While most students spend that week catching up on sleep and sunlight as they leave the library, this group of students wasn't done with theology for the summer just yet.

They took an early morning bus to arrive at St. Mark's in time for a training required for all participants in the Poor People's Campaign "nonviolent moral fusion direct action" that afternoon.

"I had to do a lot of prayer last night and come to terms with putting my body on the line for this movement," Danielle Williams, M.Div. '20, told me on her way to pick up a sack lunch after the training. "I had to mentally prepare myself to say 'I'm here to get arrested.'"

"We're in a special moment in our country's history," she said. "People don't see our faith in the mainstream, public sphere, so it's important for people of faith to take back that narrative."

Williams said she came to the Seminary from being an organizer with PICO (now Faith in Action) in California. While she had never been arrested, she had participated in direct action. She helped block a major street in Berkeley as part of a "die-in" with The Way church in Berkeley after the death of Michael Brown in 2014. In 2015, she joined PICO in occupying the governor's mansion in California to urge the signing of the Racial and Identity Profiling Act to address police brutality.

"The majority of the Bible is talking about justice, righteousness, helping the poor, widows, those with leprosy," Williams said when asked about why she planned on being arrested. "The Bible says lepers' lives matter, orphans' lives matter, widows' lives matter. In our context today, we're saying black lives matter, poor lives matter, LGBT lives matter. This is our biblical mandate and we have to take back that narrative."

In addition to Williams, five other Union students were arrested at the launch of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. The Rev. Benjamin Perry, M.Div. '15, Union's deputy director of communications and marketing, traveled with the students and was also arrested.

The national event in D.C. featured a wide array of religious and labor union leaders risking arrest, including MPower Change's Linda Sarsour and the Service Employees International Union's Rocio Sáenz. The campaign reported more than 1,000 arrests around the country during actions at 35 state capitals in addition to the national action in D.C. The direct action participants in D.C. and around the country reflected the breadth and depth of support that have been generated by the movement.

UNION'S COMMITMENT

The six Union students represented one of many connections between the seminary and the effort to resume the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final campaign. In fact, it's hard to imagine the Poor People's Campaign being revived without Union.

The most notable connection is the campaign's leadership by co-chairs the Rev. Dr. William Barber II, visiting professor of Public Theology & Activism, and the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, M.Div. '04, Ph.D. '14, director of the Kairos Center. Union has also provided behind-the-scenes infrastructure support to the campaign.

The connections between Barber's group, Repairers of the Breach—which grew out of the Moral Mondays movement in North Carolina—and Union developed over the past few years. Barber was the keynote speaker at the launch of the Kairos Center in James Chapel in November 2013. A group of Union students traveled to North Carolina to participate in the Moral Mondays movement.

Nic Laccetti, M.Div. '15, was at the launch and had traveled to North Carolina. He completed his field education requirement at the Kairos Center. He returned to Kairos after graduation and now works on Poor People's Campaign communications.

He said Union's involvement went beyond holding the funds of the campaign or recruiting other progressive Christian groups to add their endorsements. "Liberation theology informed a lot of the people that were key to the narrative of the campaign," Laccetti said, noting the legacy of the late Rev. Dr. James Cone in Union's values today. He noted the particular contribution of Theoharis's Ph.D. at Union, which focused on reading the Bible from the perspective of the poor.

This theological and biblical work led to the "heavy influence on how we see the leadership of the poor in the campaign," Laccetti told me.

A Breakthrough

Ten years ago, I was in Tunica, Miss., with the Poverty Initiative. It was the 40th anniversary of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, and we were discussing what it meant to carry forward the legacy of that campaign.

Now, in the 50th anniversary year of the campaign, we saw thousands of people come together in Washington D.C. on June 23 to take up the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. We gathered between the Washington Monument and Capitol Hill. Nearly a half million people watched the live stream, hearing poor people speak to the conditions they and 140 million others are facing across the country.

We could not have imagined this kind of crowd in 2008. We could not have imagined organizing 40 days of moral resistance across 40 states and enlisting more than 5,000 people in the largest wave of civil disobedience in the 21st century.

And yet, when the Poverty Initiative launched the Kairos Center at Union in 2013, we knew we were entering a different time. Kairos is a Greek term denoting an inflection point, a moment of crisis and opportunity when the divine breaks through and into the world. The Kairos Center has since been organizing immersions, poverty tours, roundtables, public events, truth commissions and engaged biblical, theological and poverty scholarship to deepen existing relationships and build new ones.

Five years later, our director, the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, and the Rev. Dr. William Barber II are national co-chairs of a new Poor People's Campaign that is organizing across the country. Many Kairos and Union alumni/ae are playing key leadership roles in their states and building relationships with others.

Our work, however, has only just begun. We will continue to learn as we lead, walk as we talk and teach as we fight, now with a nonviolent army of the poor that is rising up. Our task continues.

Fight poverty, not the poor!

Shailly Gupta Barnes
Policy Director For Kairos Center

The Capitol lawn shook beneath a chorus echoing Rev. Barber's rallying cry, "Forward together, not one step back!"





Barber and Theoharis stand with a crowd of moral witnesses, just before arrests begin.

Union’s administrators hailed the campaign as they waited in front of the U.S. Capitol Building for the opening rally to start.

“I’ve personally been a big fan of the work Rev. Barber has done, sacrificial work of people of this nation,” the Rev. Fred Davie, executive vice president of Union, told me as we stood under a tree to escape the sweltering summer sun in D.C. “When Rev. Barber talked to us about this work, about Union supporting him to do it, and the importance of the 50th anniversary, we said automatically yes.”

Davie expressed his personal conviction around the Poor People’s Campaign: “The basic humanity of every individual requires there be certain basic rights for everybody, from a decent wage, to a decent place to live, to decent health care. Those are all things people shouldn’t have to worry about, and we all share those values.”

“We are one-hundred-percent behind the work of the Poor People’s Campaign, because we are living in a world of such gross injustice that we have to take action collectively,” the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, president and Johnston Family Professor for Religion & Democracy at Union, told me.

“We wanted to support it from beginning to end,” Davie added. “We definitely wanted to be here today to bear witness to all the good work so many around the country are doing to try to make this nation live up to what it’s supposed to be.”

And they were. Davie and Jones followed the campaign’s procession into the street, where there was a confrontation with the United States Capitol Police followed by some arrests. Others processed on the Capitol lawn. “The students have my absolute support for their being here and getting arrested,” Jones said.

Union’s involvement in the renewal of the Poor People’s Campaign marks a change for the institution when compared to 50 years ago.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned the original Poor People’s Campaign but was assassinated before he could implement the plans. But others, including the Rev. Ralph Abernathy and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, took up the mantle and organized an encampment of poor people on the National Mall from May 15 to June 24, 1968. At its height, 2,700 people lived in tents and protested for economic justice in what they called “Resurrection City.”

“I know Union students were participants, but not key organizers like they are this time around,” Jones said.

One person who has looked for connections is Dr. Colleen Wessel-McCoy, M.Div. ’07, Ph.D. ’17, who works for Kairos and lectures at Union. Her research hasn’t uncovered any relationship between Union and the 1968 campaign—with one exception: Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Center.

“He was heavily involved,” Wessel-McCoy found. “He attended Union but didn’t graduate from here and was not a student in the time of the campaign. I wish I had a better answer!” she said in an email. “But I’m glad we have a very different relationship today.”



ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Laccetti highlighted a few Union alumni/ae who were active in the campaign, including the Rev. Emily McNeill, M.Div. '12, co-chair of the New York state campaign; the Rev. Aaron Scott, M.A. '09, and the Rev. Shelly Fayette, M.Div. '09, in Washington state; the Rev. Rose Schwab, M.Div. '14, and the Rev. Jessica Chadwick Williams, M.Div./M.S.S.W. '07, in Kansas; and the Rev. Rob Stephens, M.Div. '16, at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City.

"The last week in D.C. was like a Union reunion, seeing all these Kairos and Union alumni/ae participating on the National Mall," Laccetti said. Another Union alumnus, the Rev. Alan Dicken, M.Div. '13, also said the conclusion of the six-week campaign felt like a seminary reunion.

"At the finale of the 40 days in D.C., I ran into Union people left and right," said Dicken, now senior pastor of Carthage Christian Church in Cincinnati. He said he couldn't go 10 minutes without running into other friends from Union he hadn't seen since he graduated. He described it as "such a neat experience to see how many people were impacted all over the country and showed up in D.C."

Dicken decided to study at Union after living in Central America for a year doing development work. Seeing "the effects of American imperialism and white privilege" firsthand helped lead him to Union. His time at Union included rallying with other students in defense of Park51, the so-called "Ground Zero Mosque" that was to be built in Lower Manhattan, as well as participating in the beginning of Occupy Wall Street. It wasn't long after graduating from Union that Dicken first risked arrest in the type of nonviolent action that the Poor People's Campaign prioritized.

After the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., a fellow clergy member in Ohio called Dicken to ask, "What should we do as white ministers?"

Dicken reflected on his commitment to living out his theological belief that God has a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. "If I'm a faith leader and I'm called to live out that faith, then I need to be present especially in those places," he said. He told his clergy colleague, "I think we have to go and be present."

He ended up making three trips to Ferguson. "That to me was the education I had received at Union."

After Ferguson, he said it became easier for him to show up and be present for other racial justice issues as well as for LGBTQ justice and women's justice and poverty issues. "When the Poor People's Campaign came out addressing all of these things, this struck a chord with everything I learned at Union about these issues being intertwined."

He followed the Poor People's Campaign with special interest because of the connection to Barber, as another Disciples of Christ minister, and because of having overlapped with Theoharis at Union. But he didn't see any activity in Cincinnati.

"It took me a little bit of work to track down who the local leaders were, which surprised me because I'm fairly involved in a number of activist circles in the city," he said. He located the Ohio leaders, who were based in Columbus and Cleveland, and offered to help. He didn't miss a single Ohio event after that, organizing all of the local events in Cincinnati and participating in the statewide actions at the Capitol building in Columbus. He recruited churches, synagogues, mosques, labor halls and community centers to host



From Headlines to Changed Hearts and Minds

What could possibly unite low-income, multifaith clergy, community, elderly, LGBT and disabled leaders across the country to engage in massive protest? In May, I attended the launch of the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C., because I understood the importance of changing the narrative around poverty in this country. Shifting hearts and minds is essential for building power to create the world we want. Headlines about civil disobedience create opportunities for us organizers on the ground to spread the gospel and to advance stories and truths of the people most negatively affected by immoral policy. Civil disobedience is an act of faith that declares our refusal to be complicit in our country's communal sins: racism, militarism and the unhinged capitalism that contributes to poverty. It also challenges the dominant narrative around morality in the United States—one that emphasizes individual "sins."

Headlines are tools to empower those most affected by poverty to lead and participate in efforts to eradicate it. Headlines are opportunities to teach with humility, to educate those who lack awareness, for the purpose of transformation. It is great to see increased consciousness, but we must spread this good word in order to build the people power needed to transform the world. That means starting with our families, our neighborhood and community organizations, our spaces of privilege, our congregations, etc. It means engaging in one-on-one conversations, or group meetings, to discuss people's experience of poverty, their vision for change and how to live faith through social action. Those who are engaged in social action will continue their groundbreaking work. And for those who are new—perhaps awakened by this current administration and wanting to make a change—there is action after the protest. That's when the deeper work begins!

Danielle Williams, M.Div. '20

teach-ins and local organizers to get involved based on the campaign's weekly themes.

"Our co-chairs were pretty shy about getting arrested," he recalled, but a group of clergy and lay people eventually took on the campaign's call to force arrests. It wasn't easy.

The first week they didn't have a legal team, so they couldn't do anything. The second and third weeks they prayed, sang and chanted inside the Capitol rotunda. Police told them they were being arrested but let them go after escorting them out of the building. Finally, during the fourth Moral Monday in Ohio, they "decided to really escalate." Dicken described how they were again escorted out of the building but then blocked a street outside. Eight "moral witnesses," including three Disciples of Christ clergy, were arrested. They were processed and released from the police station without being booked.

The symbolism behind the action? "[State leaders] are blocking progress for Ohio, so we will block progress out here," he said. The following week, six new "moral witnesses" volunteered and were detained for 30 hours.

WHAT'S NEXT

"I don't think the campaign would have emerged without the involvement of [Union/Kairos Center]," Laccetti said. Union students, staff, faculty and alumni/ae helped spark the renewal of the Poor People's Campaign, and that work will continue building from the initial six weeks of direct action. The emphasis this fall will be on education, organizing and voter mobilization.

Laccetti said that the campaign would build upon the success of organizing coordination committees in 40 states and ensure that the "change in the moral narrative goes into the election."

To accomplish that kind of political and social revolution, it's going to take much more than the Union community in this righteous fight. But at this point, it's clear the spark has been lit again. We can pause and be grateful to our community for having provided the institutional and theological foundation for this reignition. ¶

Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, M.Div. '17, has written about religion and politics for a variety of national news publications, including the *Washington Post*, NBC News, the *Daily Beast* and Religion News Service. He serves as a deacon at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. Follow him on Twitter @guthriegf.

Did You Know?

BY KEVIN MCGEE

LAYING THE CORNERSTONE

ON NOVEMBER 17, 1908, almost 110 years ago to the day you received this magazine, Union’s faculty and student body traveled from the Seminary’s historic second location, at 700 Park Avenue and 70th Street in New York City, to its future third location, at 120th Street and Broadway. The new location—36 lots of unused property from 120th Street to 122nd Street and from Broadway to Claremont Avenue—was a gift from Daniel Willis James, a former director and vice president of the Union board, who died just before the November 17 dedication. The *New York Times* reported that the students, faculty, and directors, along with the presidents of Yale, Stanford, Western Reserve, New York University, Oberlin, Howard, Drew, Jewish Theological Seminary, and more watched as the cornerstone was laid by John Crosby Brown, president of the board of directors.

The *New York Times* added that the cornerstone, which was placed just to the south of the 120th Street entrance door and can be seen from Broadway, contained a Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), a Greek Bible (New Testament), an English Bible (King James Version), histories of the Seminary, Union’s constitution and by-laws, minutes of the board of directors meetings, programs of the day, and the text of Dr. George William Knox’s talk. There was no mention of when the contents of the time capsule would be opened and displayed.

The ceremony included prayers of thanks and speeches of hope. When those were done and the cornerstone set, the students donned their bowler hats and the academics their mortar boards.

On the same evening, the ceremonies continued at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, where Francis Brown (not related to John Crosby Brown), was inaugurated as the seventh president of Union Theological Seminary and delivered a talk entitled, “Theology as the Servant of Religion.”

The John Crosby Brown Memorial Tower, at the corner of 120th Street and Broadway (Reinhold Niebuhr Place), was one of the first of the Seminary’s buildings to be completed and was dedicated on November 28, 1910—Union’s 75th anniversary. The tower itself was added in 1928, providing additional floors of space for faculty offices and the unique Missionary Research Library. Other construction projects underway at the time included the addition of the Refectory and Social Hall and Lampman Chapel.

One enters Brown Memorial Tower from Broadway to find memorial tablets on the walls dedicated to former presidents and professors in a soaring three-story stone

polygonal rotunda. A marble staircase “swirls” you up to the third floor. High above the rotunda’s magnificent marble floor you’ll see an example of a perpendicular gothic ceiling design: the upward bands of the four columns spread overhead and weave to be linked at floral crossings that meet in a central rosette incorporating four shields: the University of Edinburgh, the University of Cambridge, the City of Geneva, and the Westminster Assembly.

The following movies and television shows have had scenes shot in the Rotunda: *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, *Masters of Sex*, *Mona Lisa Smile*, *Across the Universe*, and *Kill Your Darlings*. ♪



The cornerstone... contained a Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), a Greek Bible (New Testament), an English Bible (King James Version), histories of the Seminary, Union’s constitution and by-laws, minutes of the board of directors meetings, programs of the day, and the text of Dr. George William Knox’s talk.

The Many Hats of Kevin McGee

He Was Union's Party Planner, Tour Guide, and More

Interview by SCOTT SPRUNGER '19 Text by EMILY ENDERS ODOM '90



Behind the mischievous twinkle and the storied sense of humor—all wrapped up in his generous heart of gold—is the tireless dynamo and deep well of information that is Kevin McGee.

For 15 years—until his retirement in July—McGee dedicated his unique gifts and boundless energy to the people and the principles of Union Theological Seminary.

“When I started in 2003, the seminary was new to me,” says McGee, who grew up across Broadway from Union’s campus and graduated from Columbia University with a degree in sociology. “I had to learn all the aspects of Union, but having lasted for 15 years, I really loved what I did.”

Although he started his Union career as an office manager, McGee’s job title changed pretty regularly, evolving with the needs of the seminary. “When I retired from Union, even though I was simply called the director of special events,” he says, “I like to think I wore many hats.”

Some of those hats were quite colorful.

In 2010, McGee—the consummate party planner, who had organized and catered countless, memorable events and socials throughout his tenure—threw his own party at Union to celebrate 25 years of living with HIV.

“When I first learned that I was HIV positive,” explains McGee, “it was a difficult period when people could be fired and lose insurance. I was in a position where I couldn’t tell anyone, which lasted a long time. I lost a lot of friends to the disease, and I hurt friends because of my guardedness. But when I reached 25 years of living with HIV, my thought was that everybody with a major anniversary throws a party.

There’s nothing unhappy about this occasion because I’m still here and I’m doing fine and I knew I had great support and love.”

Of all of the areas in which McGee excelled, he may be best remembered for his seminary tours, filled with fascinating details about Union’s architecture, history, and mission.

“I think not many people realize that Union students ran a homeless shelter during the Depression in Stone Gym at 120th Street and Claremont,” says McGee, citing an obscure fact from his vast repertoire. “Also, during World War II, Union students were mobilized and regularly participated in civil defense drills like most of the country was doing.”

Now that he is retired, McGee prefers not to confine himself to doing any one thing.

“I want to keep exposing myself to the learning that’s available from meeting other people,” he says, “which was a gift of being at Union.”

What he says he will miss most about working for Union is meeting the students.

“My favorite time of year has always been orientation, because there’s so much energy when the new students come in,” says McGee. “They offer so much good to the world, and it’s wonderful to watch how they blossom. The students’ energy, optimism, and anger will always give me hope.” ♪

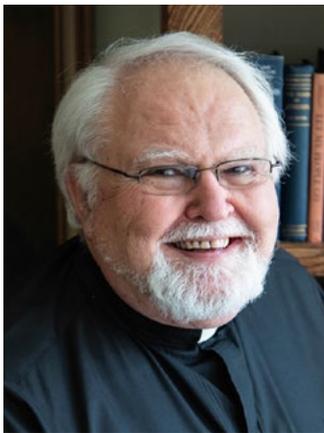
“My favorite time of year has always been orientation... The students’ energy, optimism, and anger will always give me hope.”

Congratulations to the 2018 Unitas Awardees

The Union Theological Seminary community is excited to announce the 2018 recipients of the Unitas Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards. Established in 1994, the awards bear witness to the faith and perseverance of living Union alumni/ae who exemplify the Seminary's academic breadth, its diversity and inclusiveness, and the range of vocations its graduates follow.

The ceremony was held on Friday, October 5, at 5:00 p.m., in James Memorial Chapel. Following the event, Union hosted a banquet on campus to celebrate the honorees.

The Rev. Dr. Norman J. Kansfield '67



The Rev. Dr. Norman Kansfield, who received his S.T.M. from Union, began his ministry in the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in Astoria, Queens, and continued in the Chicago suburbs. He has been a librarian and faculty member at Western Theological Seminary, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, and St. Bernard's Institute in Rochester, N.Y.

While serving as president and John Henry Livingston Professor of Theology at New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS), Kansfield showed his commitment to the full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the church. In 1998, he appointed the Rev. Dr. Judith Hoch Wray, a gifted teacher and a lesbian in an enduring relationship, to a one-year position teaching New Testament. The RCA forced the seminary board to rescind the contract, and Kansfield was rebuked by the General Synod. In June 2004, Kansfield presided at the marriage of daughter Ann and daughter-in-law Jennifer Aull, M.Div. '06, causing the seminary to end his tenure and the General Synod to suspend him from the ministry. His ecclesiastical standing was restored in 2011.

After his separation from NBTS, Kansfield served as Senior Scholar-in-Residence in the Theological School of Drew University. His current ministry is as theologian for the Zion United Church of Christ in Stroudsburg, Pa. ¶

The Rev. Dr. W. Eugene "Gene" March '66



The Rev. Dr. Gene March, A.B. Rhodes Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS), received his Ph.D. from Union. He taught at LPTS for 24 years and served in a variety of leadership roles, including dean of the faculty. Before his time in Kentucky, March taught for 16 years at Austin Presbyterian Seminary, where he received his B.D. (M.Div.) degree.

An ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), March has been active both at the congregational level, as an interim pastor and church school teacher, and in the work of the General Assembly, as chair of the Committee on Theology and Culture for eight years. He led in developing positions on proper God language, LGBTQI acceptance and ordination, justice for Palestinians, and involvement of children in worship. He led his denomination in developing a better understanding of the relationship of Christianity and Judaism and eliminating anti-Jewish language in published materials.

A popular speaker, March has written numerous curriculum studies and books, including *The Wide, Wide Circle of Divine Love: A Biblical Case for Religious Diversity*; *Great Themes of the Bible*; *God's Land on Loan: Israel, Palestine, and the World*; *God's Tapestry*; and *Six Themes in Genesis That Everyone Should Know*. ¶

The Rev. Dr. JoAnne Marie Terrell '90, '97



The Rev. Dr. JoAnne Marie Terrell, associate professor of theology, ethics, and the arts at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS), received her M.Div., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from Union. At Union, she worked as research assistant to Dr. James Cone; was a tutor for the first course on Feminist and Womanist theologies, co-taught by Dr. Beverly Harrison and Dr. Delores Williams '91; taught English as a second language;

and was a founding member of Union's gospel choir. After leaving Union, she served as associate pastor of Mount Hope AMEZ Church (White Plains, N.Y.) and as interim pastor of churches in Yonkers, N.Y., and Chicago.

At CTS, Terrell teaches systematic theology and advanced seminars on St. Augustine, Reinhold Niebuhr, Malcolm X, Womanist and Feminist Christologies, and proto-Womanist thought. In her course "AIDS and Violence," she combines her passion for art and activism by working with students on original stage plays. An ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Terrell has written extensively for journals, anthologies, and lectionaries.

In February, she was a featured speaker at "Beyond the Temple Door There Is No Promised Land: Black Women and Challenge of God Talk in the 21st Century," a conference celebrating the 25th anniversary of the publication of the groundbreaking work *Sisters in the Wilderness* by Dr. Delores Williams, Union's Paul Tillich Professor Emerita of Theology and Culture.

In April, Terrell gave the 2018 Grawemeyer Award in Religion lecture, standing in for Dr. James H. Cone, Union's Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, who won the award for his book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*.

Terrell is the author of *Power in the Blood? The Cross in the African American Experience*, a staple in theology courses in seminaries, colleges, and universities. ¶

Dr. Janet R. Walton '79



Dr. Janet Walton, a musician, liturgical scholar, educator, worship consultant, and community advocate for justice, received her Ed.D. in religion and arts from Union. As a member of the Union faculty from 1980 to 2016, she taught courses on worship and the arts, focusing on ritual traditions and practices in religious communities, with a particular interest in artistic dimensions, feminist perspectives, and

commitments to justice. Her classes took place on street corners and in prisons, concert halls, museums, temples, and churches as well as in classrooms.

Walton is past president of the North American Academy of Liturgy (1995-97), a Henry Luce Fellow in Theology and the Arts (1998), and the recipient of the American Academy of Religion Excellence in Teaching Award (2003) and the North American Academy of Liturgy Berakah Award (2009). Her books include *Art and Worship: A Vital Connection*, *Sacred Sound and Social Change* (co-edited with Lawrence Hoffman), *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity* (co-edited with Marjorie Procter-Smith), *Feminist Liturgy: A Matter of Justice*, and *New and Borrowed Rites* (co-edited with Siobhan Garrigan). She is working on her forthcoming book, *Worship Beyond Boundaries*.

In 2015, Walton and Dr. Troy Messenger, Union's director and assistant professor of worship, co-produced *Practicing for Life*, a video chronicling 30 years of the worshipping community at Union. Since retiring from Union, Walton has expanded her work as a liturgical consultant for synagogues. ¶

“The alumni/ae honored exemplify Union's intellectual rigor, but more than that, they have boldly lived out the world-changing faith which we hope to kindle in all our graduates.” —**President Serene Jones**

Faculty News



Pamela Cooper-White
Christiane Brooks Johnson Professor of Psychology and Religion

Cooper-White gave an invited lecture on her new book, *Old and Dirty Gods: Religion, Antisemitism, and the Origins of Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2017), cosponsored by Fulbright Austria, at the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna in May. At Union in July, she organized and hosted the annual three-day conference of the International Association for Spiritual Care, attended by more than 120 people from 12 countries. She was elected president of the IASC board for 2018–2020. John Thatamanil also gave a plenary presentation at the IASC conference.



Gary Dorrien
M.DIV. '78
Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics

Dorrien delivered the keynote lecture at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Conference in Amsterdam in August, and in July he gave the keynote lecture at a conference on Theological Liberalism at the University of Munich. In October, he gave the Cole Lectures at Vanderbilt Divinity School and will give the Miller Lecture at St. Norbert College. His next book, *Making Social Democracy: Political and Religious Roots of European Socialism*, and the paperback edition of his recent book *Breaking White Supremacy: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Social Gospel* will be published by Yale University Press in Spring 2019.



Lisa Thompson
Assistant Professor of Homiletics

Thompson has a new book coming out in November, *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*, which introduces a theology and practice of preaching within the simultaneous existence of being black and woman. The book opens up new avenues to understand sermon development and design for every student and practitioner of the proclaimed word. Thompson also received the Louisville Institute First Book Grant for Minority Scholars for the 2019 calendar year for her forthcoming volume with Fortress entitled *Preaching the Headlines*. The Louisville Institute's First Book Grant for Minority Scholars enables junior, tenure-track religion scholars of color to complete a major study that contributes to the vitality of Christianity in North America.



Su Yon Pak
ED.D. '99
Senior Director and Associate Professor of Integrated and Field-Based Education

Pak co-edited an anthology, *Leading Wisdom: Asian and Asian North American Women Leaders* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2017). She received the Pastoral Care Leadership Award from Jewish Theological Seminary, Center for Pastoral Education, in June. She serves as a board member of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.

⊕ utsnyc.edu/academics/faculty

1960s

Walter Brueggemann, Ph.D. '61, Unitas Distinguished Alumnus '94, has published *A Gospel of Hope* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018), in which he offers penetrating insights on Scripture and prophetic diagnoses of our culture and encourages readers to embrace the audacity required to live out one's faith. Brueggemann is William Marcellus McPheeters Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, he is the author of dozens of books, including *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*; *Journey to the Common Good*; and *Chosen: Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.

Susan E. Davies, Ed.D. '64, has been presented with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who's Who. In 2011, she retired from Bangor Theological Seminary, where she served as academic dean; taught feminist/womanist/mujerista theologies, pastoral studies, critical thinking skills, and theologies in the global South; and was responsible for opening the curriculum to courses on gender, race, class, and feminist ethics. She also supported gay students in their struggles and worked with churches during the 1980s and 1990s to move the gay community from the margins to the center of the culture, despite resistance and hostility from some church members.

David E. Sanvik, M.A. '69, has been selected for advancement to Mastership with the American College of Physicians. After graduating from Union, he worked as a social worker and middle school teacher before obtaining his M.D. from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. Beginning in 2005, he served as founding director of the South Dakota Institute of Geriatrics and continued to practice in nursing homes until 2014.

1970s

James J. Lobbell, M.Div. '75, embarked on a yearlong sabbatical from Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Inglewood, Calif., in November 2017, after a transfer of pastorship ceremony installed his replacement as pastor. Having served at Holy Trinity for more than three decades, Lobbell will return in November 2018 with his wife, Vickie, to be installed as pastor emeritus.

Fleming Rutledge, M.Div. '75, has published *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ* (Eerdmans). Highlighting “the eschatological, future-oriented nature of Advent,” she advises that the contemporary church rediscover

its call to proclaim Christ's Second Coming as the primary focus of Advent's “watching and waiting” theme. Rutledge, one of the first women to be ordained to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church, served on the staff of Grace Church in New York City for 14 years. She is a preacher and teacher known throughout the U.S., Canada, and parts of the United Kingdom.

1980s

William P. Crawford, M.Div. '81, S.T.M. '90, retired in August after 19 years as senior pastor of Larchmont Avenue Church in Larchmont, N.Y. He and his wife, Julie Faith Parker, M.Div. '88, will reside at General Theological Seminary in New York City, where Parker will begin her work as professor of Old Testament. After a short break, Crawford plans to be actively involved in a number of ministry projects.

Eric T. Duff, M.Div./M.S.S.W. '84, has written a new book, *Apostles' House*, about helping create one of the first programs for homeless families in Newark, N.J., in the mid-1980s. He is currently a psychotherapist in McKinleyville, Calif., in addition to serving at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Ferndale and providing a first-Sunday-of-the-month interfaith service at Moonstone Beach, with Ani Kunzang Drolma, Tibetan Buddhist Lama.

Sharon Nordmeyer Hope, M.Div. '86, has been appointed interim minister at Kingston (R.I.) Congregational United Church of Christ. “I've retired four times now,” she wrote in a Facebook post. “Sharon Ann plans and God laughs!”

Janet K. Acker, M.Div./M.S.S.W. '89, has been appointed founding program director of the Master of Science in Social Work program at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, N.Y. She joined the social work faculty at the college in 2012.

Ian A. McFarland, M.Div. '89, has been Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University since 2015. His scholarship focuses on contemporary articulations of Christian doctrine that attend both to the concerns of the catholic tradition, broadly conceived, and to the voices of Christians historically marginalized in that tradition. He previously taught at the University of Aberdeen (1998–2005) and at Emory University's Candler School of Theology (2005–2015), where he was the inaugural holder of the Bishop Mack B. and Rose Stokes Chair in Theology.

1990s

Noel E. Bordador, M.Div. '90, moved to the Philippines in 2016, where he opened a Catholic-Worker-inspired house of hospitality for

indigent persons living with HIV/AIDS. The house functions as a small community, “and the idea is we live together and share our life together,” Bordador writes. “I am here as a voluntary priest (Episcopal) and missionary of some sort for the Episcopal Church, but my life really is with the Catholic Worker house. For how long I'm not sure what the Lord has in mind. But I have no plans yet to return to the U.S.A. for good; to visit, yes, perhaps in 2019.”

Michal Ann Shapiro Hogan, M.Div./M.S.S.W. '90, has been hired by Higgins & Carter LLC, a psychotherapy center in downtown Chicago.

Rebecca G. Dudley, M.Div. '91, contributed to “Tips for Meghan Markle on How to Be Married to a Briton,” published in the May 18 *New York Times*. The *Times* asked American readers who are married to Brits, and vice versa, to describe some of the charms and challenges of having a spouse from another continent. Dudley met her future husband, **David J. Tombs, S.T.M. '88**, in 1987 during orientation week for Union Seminary “on the Staten Island Ferry, while we were looking at the Statue of Liberty (really),” she wrote. “He was straight out of Oxford and looked like Sting.” Since 2015, they have been living in New Zealand, where Tombs is the Howard Paterson Professor of Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago, North Dunedin.

Marc S. Mullinax, Ph.D. '93, is the elected chair of the faculty at Mars Hill (N.C.) University, where he teaches courses in the academic study of religion, Appalachian and Asian religions, Christian theology, youth ministry, and religion's intersections with sociology, biology, and history. He's been teaching at Mars Hill since 2001 and often travels to South Korea to teach summer courses. His term as chair extends to 2020.

Sylvester A. Johnson, M.A. '97, Ph.D. '02, is professor and founding director of the Center for the Humanities at Virginia Tech. He also serves as a mentor for the nationally acclaimed Young Scholars in American Religion fellows program administered by the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University–Purdue University in Indianapolis.

2000s

Valerie Bailey Fischer, M.Div. '04, has been appointed chaplain at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass. Previously she was priest associate at Calvary Episcopal Church in Summit, N.J., and prior to that, university chaplain at Framingham (Mass.) State University. Her research examines an ancient order of female deacons in the early church, its late-19th-century

Janet Okang M.A. in Biblical Studies, '18

NEW YORK CITY



“...bringing hope to African children involves a lot of hard work, each moment helps renew my commitment to love, inspire others and sacrifice in the service of those with great need.”

What do you do?

Prior to Union, I was working in an administrative, pastoral and teaching capacity in the Bible College of Ghana. After completing my M.A. program at Union, I now help as a part-time professor of New Testament in nondenominational colleges in West Africa (Ghana), training students who wish to go into pastoral ministry and missions. I have also had the opportunity to found a nonprofit organization, Christ Love for Kids (CLOK), that evangelizes children in rural areas of Ghana—children who have little or no exposure to the gospel and who suffer from difficult economic conditions. In addition to preaching the gospel twice a year, with the support of friends and volunteers, the group offers basic screenings, health care and provisions for some of the basic needs of the children (clothes, shoes, bags, books, etc.). Through mentorship, career guidance and training in craft skills, we help the children develop academic skills and ensure that each child feels loved.

I have been exposed to a lot of children’s needs in local communities. Recently, with some personal savings and a grant I received from Union, I have been able to drill a borehole that supplies water and to build classrooms for elementary education in a community called Amanfrom in the eastern part of Ghana. This village of about 3,500 people had minimal water and just one school (private). This meant some of the mature children traveled far for education, while others stayed at home due to lack of preschool infrastructures. The new elementary school, Amanfrom Academy, was scheduled to open in September. I am hopeful that in the near future I can help build more classrooms and a home for orphans.

How has Union prepared you for this?

I have the opportunity at Union to engage with questions confronting Christianity in the West and in the non-Western world today. I have acquired strong administrative skills from my work-study with Housing and Campus Services and from working with the SLA team. This has enhanced my experience and enabled me to be better prepared for Ghana and West Africa as a whole.

What is the best thing about your job?

Though being an educator and bringing hope to African children involves a lot of hard work, each moment helps renew my commitment to love, inspire others and sacrifice in the service of those with great need.

What would you say to someone considering going to Union?

As one of Union’s international students, I would say the diverse backgrounds of students and faculty at Union equip us with cultural and denominational sensibilities that will be very useful when we return to our communities. The location of the Seminary (New York City) enables students to interact with Christians from both the Western and non-Western world. Be prepared to be enhanced through an experience that will equip you for a better tomorrow. 🙌

ABOVE: Okang poses with a group of children at Amanfrom village in Eastern Ghana, gathered to celebrate drilling a local well.

CLASS NOTES

revival, and its role in the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Kelly Murphy Mason, M.Div./M.S.S.W. '04, has been appointed the next settled minister of Unitarian Universalists of Wellesley (Mass.). Previously she was director of pastoral care and counseling programs at the Blanton-Peale Institute and taught on the adjunct faculties of both the Fordham University Graduate School of Religion and the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Teachers College, Columbia University. For the past several years, she has been a lecturer at Union. Mason was ordained into ministry by the Community Church of New York, Unitarian Universalist.

Emily A. Peck-McClain, M.Div. '05, has published *Arm in Arm with Adolescent Girls: Educating into the New Creation*, a practical theology for liberating ministry with adolescent girls. In it Peck-McClain puts interviews with 24 adolescent girls from the New York area into conversation with Paul's theology as expressed in Romans 6–8. She is also one of five contributing editors of *We Pray with Her: Encouragement for All Women Who Lead*, a collection of 100 devotions and prayers from 70 United Methodist clergwomen under 40, released in September. Peck-McClain is visiting professor of Christian formation and young adult ministries at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Alyssa Rayman-Read, M.A. '05, has been appointed vice president and director of the Massachusetts office of the Conservation Law Foundation. Prior to joining CLF, Rayman-Read was assistant general counsel and director of labor engagement at Northeastern University, where she advised the university's senior executive team on labor relations, strategic communications, and organizational development. She also investigated and prosecuted unfair labor practice complaints across New England at the National Labor Relations Board.

Laurel Severns Guntzel, M.Div. '07, is a practicing psychotherapist in Minneapolis, where she joined the Westminster Counseling Center in 2017. She helps clients explore sources of pain and suffering, discern what is most important for their lives, and harness their strengths and wisdom in the service of a richer, more meaningful life. She is experienced working with adults navigating life transitions, identity issues, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorders, and trauma. She earned her M.A. in counseling psychology from St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

David E. Jackson, M.Div. '07, just celebrated his second year in the episcopacy of the Light of the World Covenant Fellowship, based in Atlanta.

Jackson provides administrative oversight to churches in Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Uganda, and Kenya.

Laurel Koepf Taylor, M.Div. '08, Ph.D. '12, has been granted tenure at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. A member of Eden's faculty since 2012, Koepf Taylor is professor of Old Testament. Her research focuses on children in the Bible and how people thought about children differently in the biblical world than we do in the United States today. Her first publication, *Give Me Children or I Shall Die: Children and Survival in Biblical Literature*, based on her revised Ph.D. dissertation, was released in 2013.

Ben Sanders III, M.Div. '08, was awarded the Ph.D. in religious and theological studies by the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology in June.

Kelsey Blankenship White, M.Div. '09, has co-edited *Evidence-Based Healthcare Chaplaincy: A Research Reader Paperback* with George Fitchett and Kathryn Lyndes. Bringing together key articles from peer-reviewed journals in one student-friendly format, the text offers techniques critical to chaplaincy research: case studies, qualitative research, cross-sectional and longitudinal quantitative research, and randomized clinical trials. The articles also address wide-ranging topics in chaplaincy research for a comprehensive overview of the field. White is a board-certified chaplain with Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Ky., and a Transforming Chaplaincy research fellow.

2010s

Lydia Hernández-Marcial, S.T.M. '12, a Doctor of Philosophy student at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), has been selected to receive the Hispanic Theological Initiative/Lilly fellowship for the 2018–19 academic year. She has also received an honorary fellowship from the Louisville Institute for the same period. Hernández-Marcial's doctorate will be in biblical studies; she is specializing in Hebrew Bible, particularly Wisdom Literature.

Jami Yandle, M.Div. '12, was called forth at the June 2018 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly to receive preliminary fellowship as a UU minister. After working for three years, mostly solo, Yandle brought forward at last year's GA a proposal to update the Second Source language from "prophetic women and men" to "prophetic people" for inclusivity purposes, and it passed the preliminary vote. This year the proposal was brought to the floor again and approved. The new language accommodates children and youth and also affords visibility to trans persons.

Aram Bae, Ph.D. '13, is associate pastor for youth and mission of First Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Va. This is her first call, and she is thrilled to call Charlottesville her new home. She was a keynoter at the 2018 Montreat Youth Conference in North Carolina.

Matthew D. Dean, M.Div. '13, was recently hired as Environmental Justice Exchange Coordinator with New Voices for Reproductive Justice in Pittsburgh.

Lauren Giaccone, M.Div. '13, married Ryan Cain in April and has changed her name to Lauren Cain. She became the Pastoral Ministries Coordinator for Maris Grove, a retirement community in Glen Mills, Pa., in July 2017, after completing a two-year CPE residency with Penn Medicine. She is a Member In Discernment with the United Church of Christ.

Aidan William Owen, M.Div. '13, was ordained a priest at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, N.Y., in June. Andrew M.L. Dietsche, diocesan bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, presided. Dozens of friends, family members, and Holy Cross associates were there for the occasion and joined the brothers for a festive dinner of Mexican street food afterwards.

Jennifer C. A. Wilder, M.Div. '13, married Gregory W. Wallace in June on Wye Island, Md. Wilder is pastor of Broadview Church in Owings, Md., and Wallace is a producer for CNN.

William H. Critzman, M.Div. '14, has accepted a call to be the senior minister at West End Collegiate Church, part of New York City's historic Collegiate Church Corporation. He had previously served as minister of discipleship at First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York.

Kristen Leigh Southworth, M.Div. '14, was married in June to Joe Tyler Mitchell, an Episcopal priest and 2012 graduate of General Theological Seminary. She has changed her name to Kristen Leigh Mitchell. The Mitchells live in Asheboro, N.C., where Joe serves as rector of a local parish, while Kristen writes music, teaches classes and workshops on singing and spirituality, leads a monthly Beer & Hymns sing-a-long, and practices archery. She is writing a book about the church and the arts and plans to release her next album in 2019.

Stephanie Gannon, M.Div. '15, was ordained to the ministry in the Unitarian Universalist Church in April in Brooklyn, N.Y. Starting this fall, she will be combining mental health chaplaincy work with veterans at VA Pittsburgh with service as part-time minister at East Suburban UU Church in Murrysville, Pa. She is also excited to announce her recent engagement to Dr. Rob Fallon. They are planning a wedding in Pittsburgh next May.

Robert M. Najdek Jr., M.A. '15, has been elected to the Queens County (N.Y.) Democratic Committee. In August he entered the CUNY School of Law to study immigration law.

Terry Cummings, M.Div. '16, has been appointed interim minister at the Granite Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Prescott, Ariz.

Miles A. Goff, M.Div. '16, married **Emily F. Hamilton, M.Div. '15**, in July, with the Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad officiating. Goff is Minister for Faith and Action at Christ Church United, UCC, in Lowell, Mass. Hamilton is pastor of First Lutheran Church in Malden, Mass.

Ken Kurihara, M.A. '16, has been associate professor at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University in Sendai, Japan, since April 2017. He teaches courses in Basic Christianity, and Christianity and Modern Society, among others.

Elizabeth Colmant Estes, M.Div. '17, was elected to the Commission on Theology of the Reformed Church in America. She received the denomination's 2018–19 Hazel B. Gnade Fellowship to research women awarded the Master of Divinity degree at Union in 1973, who became the first women ordained in both the RCA (Joyce Stedje) and the Episcopal Church (several, among them Carter Heyward). If you have stories to share about the women of the class of 1973, please contact lizestes@mac.com.

Suzanne C. Campise, M.Div. '18, has been appointed vicar at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kingston, N.Y.

Ian Carr McPherson, M.Div. '18, has been appointed Minister for Youth and Young Adult Initiatives at the United Church of Chapel Hill (N.C.).

Janet Okang, M.A. '18, spent the summer in Amanfrom, a village with a population of 3,500 in the Eastern part of Ghana. She drilled a much-needed borehole to augment the local water supply. Because the village had just one school (private), she built classrooms for elementary education, so children from Amanfrom would not have to travel to the next villages. The newly established elementary school, Amanfrom Academy, opened in September. Okang is also a part-time professor of New Testament at nondenominational colleges in West Africa (Ghana). She has been admitted to the S.T.M. program at Union for 2018–2019. ♪

To submit a class note or death notice, please contact **Emily Odom, Director of Alumni/ae Relations**, at eodom@uts.columbia.edu or 212-280-1419.

In Memoriam

AS OF OCTOBER 7, 2018

Alumni/ae

Jane Lockwood Barney '40
 William W. McKee '41
 William Graham Cole '43
 Chester J. Jump, Jr. '43
 Frederick W. Forkel, Jr. '43
 George H. Dehority '48
 Frances M. Sydnor '49
 Eva Martin Staples Boswell '49
 Simon J. De Vries '50, '58
 Alister C. Anderson '50
 Barbara Jean Campbell Barnhart '50
 Floyd L. Accola '51
 William W. Young '51
 Eunice Blanchard Poethig '52, '85
 William Campbell Bothwell '52
 Herbert L. Doggett '52
 James Milton Murphy '52
 John W. Steen, Jr. '52
 Akira Hiram '53
 Charles S. Wilhite '53
 John Ferguson Gray Morris, Jr. '53
 Hoyt L. Hickman '54
 Richard S. Shaper '54
 William G. Morrice '55
 John Jerome Staton '55
 David C. Duncombe '55
 Beatrice Weaver McConnell '55
 Robert Norman Taylor '55
 Zona Marie Fennelly '55
 John Nelson Park '55
 Robert J. Chamberlin '56
 Henry H. Hobbs '56
 John B. Paterson '56
 Charles E. Landis '56
 Mildred M. Heimlich '56
 Carlton T. Mitchell '56
 Ivan E. Frick '57
 Edward L. Henderlite '58
 Richard W. Felsing '59
 Robert K. Hudnut '59
 John Opie '59
 Aurelia Takacs Fule '60
 George S. Paris '60
 Barbara Hunter Walch '60
 Elizabeth Plowman '61
 Jack A. Jennings '61
 Mary Jane Raiche Ringham '61
 William J. Hausmann '61
 Jack Higham '61

Frederick E. Dennard '62
 Charles Chiau-liong Kao '62
 Robert Wood Lynn '62
 Thomas J. Philipp '62
 J. Walter Cason '62
 Christopher Morgan Brookfield '63, '68
 Jack W. Jones '64
 Judith Richardson Minter '64
 Robert Tomson Fortna '65
 Theodore E. Wilde '65
 Ward Williams '65
 Gordon D. Negen '65
 John F. Messerschmitt '66
 Margaret C. Bunnell Miller '66
 Mary Ellen Benson Abrecht '69
 Edwin B. Metzger '69
 Carl Schroeder '69
 William C. Saunders '70, '79
 Richard J. Harvey '70
 Lorenzo M. Robinson '71
 Robert A. Wiltshire '73
 Josephine G. Smith '76
 Katie Geneva Cannon '83
 Mariah A. Britton '86
 Everett Eugene Jones '92
 Gladys "Punkie" Dennis '94
 Hollis W. Huston '06

Faculty, Staff, Trustees, and Friends of Union

Edmund Coffin
 William Theodore Debary
 Joyce Dompree
 A. Wright Elliott
 Travis Emery
 Sara M. Hunter
 Elizabeth B. Jewett
 Joan Konner
 Ellsworth George Stanton III

NOTE: We regret that we mistakenly announced the death of John "Jack" T. Mathison '57 in the Spring issue. He is alive and well, and resides in a retirement community in Washington, D.C.

Katie Geneva Cannon, Ph.D. '83, Unitas Distinguished Alumna '07, Union Medalist '16, Dies

BY LEAH ROBINSON ROUSMANIERE

THE REV. DR. KATIE GENEVA CANNON, widely regarded as a founder of the Womanist movement, a formidable liberation theologian and Christian ethicist, died August 8. She was 68.

The first African American woman to be awarded the Ph.D. at Union Theological Seminary and the first African American woman to be ordained in the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Cannon was the Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Va. She announced in June that she had been diagnosed with acute leukemia.

In a joint statement, the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, president of Union, and the Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union, wrote: "It is with great sadness that we write to share news of the passing of Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon this afternoon. Dr. Cannon was dearly loved by many here at Union, as a student, a teacher, a colleague, and a personal friend. She was a remarkable woman, and as a scholar, she was known around the world for her groundbreaking work in Womanist theology and Christian ethics. She will be sorely missed."

Cannon was the author or editor of numerous articles and several books, including *Katie's Canon: Womanism* and the *Soul of the Black Community* and *Black Womanist Ethics*. But most important, she was an oracle of "unshouted courage" and a lodestar for Black women journeying to self-actualization.

On the anvil of her inner being—alongside such pioneering scholars as Dr. Delores Williams, the Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes, and the Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant—she forged Womanist ethics—a term coined by Alice Walker—fashioning the perspectives and literary traditions of Black women into revolutionary discourse for the church, academy and society at large. She deployed methods of Christian social ethics to new advantage, creating space for the unheard to be heard, the inconsolable to be comforted, the beaten down to rise

up and the disenfranchised to discover and celebrate their own innate moral wisdom.

Cannon received her Bachelor of Science from Barber-Scotia College and her Master of Divinity from Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary. She was ordained April 24, 1974, in Shelby, N.C., by Catawba Presbytery in the Synod of Catawba. At the time, the United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—predecessor of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—listed 154 white women



as ordained clergy, according to General Assembly Stated Clerk the Rev. J. Herbert Nelson II, in a statement released by the PC(USA).

Cannon, who had taught at Union in Richmond since 2001, received numerous awards for her teaching, including the Excellence in Teaching Award from the American Academy of Religion. She also served on the faculties of Temple University, Episcopal Divinity School and Harvard Divinity School.

In 2016 she was awarded the Union Medal. The citation read in part: "Your life, your theology and your 'pedagogy of possibility' embody the highest ideals and aspirations of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York."

The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference bestowed its Beautiful Are the Feet Award on her in February. Most recently, she was recognized at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly with the Award for Excellence in Theological Education, the highest honor in the PC(USA) for those who teach, lead and support theological education.

In a video played at the award ceremony, she likened the call to teach religion to a "fire in your bones." "Teaching is my ministry," she said. "I love teaching to empower, to equip, to set people free."

The Rev. Dr. Barbara K Lundblad, Union's Joe R. Engle Professor of Preaching Emerita, expressed the feelings of many when she wrote in a post on Facebook: "Katie Geneva Cannon has joined the great communion of saints beyond our knowing, but how we shall miss her here on this earth.... Rest in peace, dear sister. You have changed the way we see the world."

Cannon is survived by her mother, Corine L. Cannon; sisters and brothers Sara Cannon Fleming, Doris Cannon Love, Sylvia Moon, John Cannon and Jerry Cannon; and 21 nieces and nephews, including actor Nick Cannon and musicians Joshua Cannon Fleming and Cedric T. Love.

A funeral service was held August 14 at Bethpage United Presbyterian Church in Concord, N.C. A memorial service was held September 10 at Union Presbyterian Seminary. ¶

Condolences may be sent to:

The Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Cannon and Family
2329 Carved Tree Lane
Charlotte, NC 28262-3154

Gifts in memory of the Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon may be made to Union's Annual Fund, which will again be dedicated entirely to student scholarship support.

The Power of Giving

THE ANNUAL FUND
JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY of alumni/ae, trustees and friends who support Union Theological Seminary's crucial work, the 2017-18 Annual Fund exceeded its goal of \$1.085 million by raising \$1.240 million. A total of 1,271 contributors, including 1,037 alumni/ae, helped to put Union over the top. Among those giving to the fund, 52 were first-time contributors and 553 increased their giving.

Once again, the Annual Fund focused entirely on raising scholarship support for Union students, many of whom would simply be unable to attend the Seminary without financial assistance. Describing the profound impact of the Raymond E. Brown/J. Louis Martyn Scholarship on her experience, Janet Okang, M.A. '18, writes: "The scholarship I received restored my academic dreams and goals and gave me hope. It has enabled me to learn a great deal from my professors and peers. It is indeed a privilege for me to be at Union."

We are deeply grateful to each and every person who responded to Union's Annual Fund by making a gift in support of scholarships.

Should you wish to offer your support, or if you have questions, please contact Gabriele Gossner at ggossner@uts.columbia.edu or 212.280.1412.

The Campaign for Union

JANUARY 2014–DECEMBER 2017

In January 2014, the Seminary launched an ambitious but critically important Campaign for Union, with the goal of raising \$25 million for student scholarships, faculty support, and social justice programming. Thanks to the generosity of trustees, alumni/ae, friends and foundations, Union exceeded its campaign goal by raising more than \$31 million for these vital purposes.

A full campaign report will be mailed this fall.

Planned Giving

What will the future say about us? This question invites us to construct an intentional and enduring legacy by stirring the conscience and envisioning the future.

One small yet significant aspect of such a mighty spiritual project involves gift planning. For example, adding Union as a beneficiary in your will or naming Union as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy links your personal legacy to Union's future. And for those who have retirement assets or other investments, giving a portion of those to Union could have substantial tax benefits. No gift is too small when every dollar is precious.

Our global Union network is a beautiful community of action and conscience. We extend special thanks to the 237 alumni/ae and friends who have already shared their bequest intentions with us as well as to those who requested more information about charitable gift planning. ¶

If you would like to know more or have questions, please contact DenaSue Potestio, special assistant for development, at 212.280.1453. GIVE ONLINE: myunion.utsnyc.edu/donate



SHEER JOY: Union graduating students (CLOCKWISE) Leigh Britton, Htoi Lu, and Amy Meverden celebrate their momentous milestone.

SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 2019

Trailblazers 2019

Honoring and Celebrating Union's Black Alumni/ae



The 2019 Trailblazers series will honor the life and legacy of Dr. James Hal Cone, Bill & Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, with four Friday worship services at 7:00 p.m., February 1, 8, 15, 22. The services will focus on Cone's founding of Black Liberation Theology, as well as the doors he opened for other theologies to emerge, including Queer Theology and exploration of Environmental Racism. Additional information will soon be available on the Union website.

▼ Alumni/ae Gather in New Mexico



New Mexico alums gathered for dinner in Albuquerque on June 3 following a lecture by Larry L. Rasmussen '70, Union's Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics, titled "How Do We Hymn the Earth in a Time of Climate Change." LEFT TO RIGHT: Takako S, Terino '08, Nyla Rasmussen, Anna Taylor Sweringen '83, Karen Bash, Mary Ann Lundy '57, Larry Rasmussen, Donald Wilson, F. Allan Bash '71, Mary Stuart '76, and Thomas Stuart.

▼ General Assembly



Ashley DeTar Birt '14, a member of the More Light Presbyterians National Board of Directors, attended the PC(USA) General Assembly, St. Louis, Mo., June 16-23.

UNION

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ORIENTATION 2018:
This fall, Union welcomed an incoming class of 110 students—the largest in decades.